

chaired the selection committee, was more forthcoming.

He told the Post that "very serious people from the State Department in particular" expressed concerns about this award being given to Amb. Evans. Laingen said that the award committee had not focused on the criterion that dissent had to be expressed within the system, until it was reminded of that by the State Department!

Once again, as a result of the over-reaction of Turkish officials and their Washington cronies, the issue of the Armenian Genocide was publicized worldwide. All of the above newspapers and wire services, even the Turkish and Azeri ones, reported that the award had been withdrawn from Amb. Evans because of his comments on the Armenian Genocide. The Washington Post wrote that Amb. Evans had characterized "as genocide the deaths of 1.5 million Armenians in the waning days of the Ottoman Empire in 1915." It included in its article lengthy quotations from the statements Amb. Evans had made last February on the Armenian Genocide—the same quotations that I had cited in my last week's column.

The Washington Post also wrote: "the timing of the association's decision appeared curious, given it came just before Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan arrived in Washington for a meeting with President Bush to bolster strained U.S.-Turkish relations. John W. Limbert, president of the association, said that no one at the organization can remember an award being withdrawn after it had been announced. 'It is not something we do easily,' he said."

Ironically, if the State Department thought that by withdrawing this award it would avoid the awkward situation of honoring the U.S. ambassador to Armenia for acknowledging the Armenian Genocide, at a time when the Turkish Prime Minister was meeting with Pres. Bush, it actually ended up creating a bigger embarrassment, as the national and international media reported AFSA's controversial decision, while the Turkish leader was still in Washington.

By withdrawing the "Dissent" award, AFSA and the State Department made fools of themselves in front of the whole world. Their unwarranted action not only undermined the credibility of the award, but also the reputations of both AFSA and the U.S. government which acted in this case with intolerance more typical of oppressive third world regimes.

[From the California Courier]

FOREIGN SERVICE AGENCY WRONGLY  
WITHDRAWS AWARD FROM AMB. EVANS

(By Harut Sassounian)

The American Foreign Service Association took the very unusual step this week of rescinding the prestigious "Constructive Dissent" award that it had decided to bestow upon U.S. Ambassador to Armenia John Evans, during a special ceremony that was to be held at the Benjamin Franklin Diplomatic Reception Room of the State Department on June 17.

The AFSA is the professional association of the United States Foreign Service. It represents 26,000 active and retired Foreign Service employees of the Department of State and Agency for International Development. The Secretary of State usually attends the group's annual award ceremony.

Last February, during his tour of various Armenian communities in the United States, Amb. Evans publicly referred to the extermination of the Armenians in Ottoman Turkey as genocide. "I will today call it the Armenian Genocide," the U.S. Ambassador said. "I informed myself in depth about it. I think

we, the U.S. government, owe you, our fellow citizens, a more frank and honest way of discussing this problem. Today, as someone who has studied it, . . . there is no doubt in my mind what happened. . . . I think it is unbecoming of us, as Americans, to play word games here. I believe in calling things by their name." Referring to "the first Genocide of the 20th century," Amb. Evans said, "I pledge to you, we are going to do a better job at addressing this issue."

Amb. Evans knew that his frank comments ran counter to the official line of recent U.S. administrations that have avoided using the term genocide to characterize the mass killings of Armenians. After complaints from Turkish officials to the U.S. government, Amb. Evans was forced by his superiors to issue "a clarification," stating that he used the term "genocide" in his personal capacity—and he now found that to be "inappropriate." To make matters worse, Amb. Evans was then forced to correct his clarification, replacing the word "genocide" with "Armenian tragedy."

Since Amb. Evans had dared to challenge the position of his own superiors, he was nominated for the AFSA's coveted "Constructive Dissent" award. The AFSA's web site explains that this award "publicly recognizes individuals who have demonstrated the intellectual courage to challenge the system from within, to question the status quo and take a stand, no matter the sensitivity of the issue or the consequences of their actions." The AFSA states: "The purpose of the Dissent Awards is to encourage Foreign Service career employees to speak out frankly and honestly." It also states that the Constructive Dissent Awards "offer an opportunity to publicly recognize and honor the courageous and thoughtful actions of our colleagues, over and above their responsibilities."

Last week, Hayagan Jamanag, a newspaper published in Yerevan, reported that Amb. Evans was the winner of this year's "Constructive Dissent" award. Since the name of the honoree was not yet officially announced, I contacted the AFSA in Washington, D.C., and was told that Amb. Evans was indeed the winner of this prestigious award. I was also told that he was selected because of his stand on the Armenian Genocide.

As this column was about to go to print, I received an unexpected call from an AFSA official in Washington, informing me that the Award Committee had just met and decided to reverse itself and "withdraw the award" from Amb. Evans. When I asked why, the answer was "no comment."

We can safely speculate that the same cast of characters at the upper echelons of the Bush Administration, who had earlier forced Amb. Evans to withdraw his remarks on the Armenian Genocide, had now succeeded in forcing the AFSA to rescind this award.

Incredibly, what they were taking away from Amb. Evans was not just any award. It was an award for dissenting from the Bush administration's immoral position on the Armenian Genocide. It was an award for simply telling the truth. Amb. Evans was basically repeating what President Ronald Reagan had said back in 1981 in his Presidential Proclamation, acknowledging the Armenian Genocide. It would seem that Bush administration officials are not afraid to go after an Ambassador, but they would not dare to take on President Reagan who committed the same sin of telling the truth!

It is a telling sign of decadent times that an individual has to be given an award for having "the courage" to tell the truth—and worse yet, have that award unfairly taken away from him.

All those who side with truth and justice, should complain to the AFSA

(berger@afsa.org) for its withdrawal of Amb. Evans' award and ask that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice (<http://contact-us.state.gov>) have it reinstated promptly.

## RECOGNIZING JOSHUA FISHER FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

### HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 15, 2005

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Joshua Fisher of Weston, Missouri, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 249, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout. Joshua achieved the rank of Eagle Scout on October 14, 2004.

Joshua has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years that Joshua has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

For his Eagle Scout project, Joshua organized the creation of a new welcome sign, the pouring of concrete slabs for picnic tables, and the installation of a new flag pole with lighting around it, all at Bless Park in Weston.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Joshua Fisher for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

## A TRIBUTE TO DR. ROGER WITHERSPOON

### HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 15, 2005

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Dr. Roger Witherspoon. Dr. Witherspoon completed his undergraduate studies at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. He is a graduate of Adelphi University's Graduates School of Social Work in Garden City, New York and earned his doctorate degree from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Dr. Witherspoon previously was Associate Dean of Student Affairs at CUNY Lehman College. He is currently the Vice-President of Student Development at CUNY John Jay College of Criminal Justice where his responsibilities include chairing the Communication Skills and Counseling Department, administrative oversight of Student Activities, Freshman Program, Children's Center, Career Advisement, Women's Center, Disabled Student Services, Financial Aid, Health Services, Co-op Education/Internships, and Student Support Services.

Prior to his appointment as Vice-President, Dr. Witherspoon taught both graduate and undergraduate courses in education and social work for over 17 years. He has lectured at Columbia University, St. John's University, San Francisco State, Smith College, Fordham University, and many others. His publications on

urban education have appeared in national and local journals. Two of his recent publications are "Do You Know If Your Child Has a Credit Card," in the *New York Times* and "Handling Cultural Diversification Efforts of College Campuses," in the *Journal of Mediation*.

Dr. Witherspoon was a member of the Board of the Queens Children's Psychiatric Center. He has also served on many boards that include childcare, teen pregnancy, and community mental health.

Dr. Witherspoon was selected as a participant in the 23rd Annual Session of the Harvard University's Institute for Educational Management, Class of 1992.

Dr. Witherspoon has participated in conferences held on "International Perspectives: Crime, Justice and Public Order" in Russia, Ireland, Turkey, Italy, England, Hungary and most recently Romania. He was involved in the establishment of a branch campus in Puerto Rico that has awarded 4,400 Associates Degrees to police cadets and currently a program for New York City Police Officers to teach cultural diversity and leadership.

Dr. Witherspoon has been involved at national and local levels consulting on issues of urban education and social work, with a focus on urban minorities. His visits to South Africa, Ireland, Dominican Republic, Namibia, Turkey, South Korea, Slovenia, England, Guyana, Jamaica, and throughout the Caribbean have only increased his awareness of International Education and Criminal Justice.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Roger Witherspoon's continued his commitment to higher education and social development have made him more than worthy of our recognition today.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 15, 2005*

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, because participating in events connected to the ongoing meeting of Western Governors in Colorado, I was unable to be present for two votes on Monday, June 13, 2005.

If I had been present, I would have voted as follows:

On S. 643, to amend the Agricultural Credit Act of 1987 to reauthorize State mediation programs, I would have voted "yes."

On H.R. 2326, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 614 West Old County Road in Belhaven, North Carolina, as the "Floyd Lupton Post Office," I would have voted "yes."

#### TRIBUTE TO MRS. LIZ KOVACH, FOR HER 50 YEAR COMMITMENT TO PORT COLUMBUS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

### HON. DEBORAH PRYCE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 15, 2005*

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize the tremendous achievement of Liz Kovach, a successful and

respected employee at the Port Columbus International Airport. As an ambassador to the Airport Authority and Columbus, Ohio she has represented Eastern Airlines, Continental Airlines and America West for half a century with first class style.

Mrs. Kovach began her career at Port Columbus exactly 50 years ago today working for Eastern Airlines at the old terminal on Fifth Avenue. In late 1990, when Eastern Airlines declared bankruptcy, Liz's diligence and dedication were greatly appreciated when she assisted with the liquidation of the airline's assets before being hired by Continental Airlines in April of 1991. Her career again took off in November of 1992 when she accepted a new position with America West. Her effervescent character and strong intellect were recognized in 1993, as she was honored by America West as the Best of the Best Employees. She was one of only two customer service representatives to receive the honor out of 10,000 employees.

In Liz's 50 year commitment to Port Columbus, she has been witness to the transformation of the airline industry. She has seen the airport rise to "international status," its entrance into the Jet age, concourse and runway expansion, and the completion of the new state-of-the-art control tower.

Mrs. Kovach, respectively known as "Mama Liz," is revered by her colleagues as someone you can always count on for a smile and kind words. She has been described as an irreplaceable talent to the customer service team. In addition to her noted superior work ethic and admirable character, she has been very active with the Columbus Zoo. Through her perseverance, she negotiated the travel of rare animals by plane to be brought to the zoo.

I am grateful for the time, commitment and grace Liz has given to Port Columbus International Airport and her community. She exemplifies what public service and professionalism are all about.

#### RECOGNIZING ALEXANDER J. MCCURN FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

### HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 15, 2005*

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Alexander J. McCurn of Kansas City, Missouri, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 261, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Alexander has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Alexander has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Alexander J. McCurn for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

#### A TRIBUTE TO JENNIFER FLYNN

### HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 15, 2005*

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Jennifer Flynn. For close to two years, Jennifer Flynn ended her workday by standing for six hours in front of New York City's largest welfare center. She and other activists took their place on the sidewalk whether it rained or snowed to protest the lack of legally mandated emergency housing for homeless people living with AIDS.

Ms. Flynn is one of 10 outstanding individuals from across the country chosen to receive this year's Robert Wood Johnson Community Health Leadership Program award.

The unusual strategy, combined with litigation and public education, resulted in the City being found in contempt of a court order—and insured that nearly every homeless New Yorker living with AIDS who needed emergency housing received it.

Ms. Flynn didn't stop there. She went on to co-found and direct the New York City AIDS Housing Network (NYCAHN), which has seen to it that housing is provided to every single New Yorker with HIV/AIDS who requests shelter.

HIV has hit low-income people of color harder than any other demographic group in New York City. A full 92 percent of New Yorkers living with HIV/AIDS are from communities of color.

Of Ms. Flynn, Christine Quinn, Councilmember for the 3rd District says: "Jennifer Flynn has managed to be a constant activist for the rights of homeless and low-income people living with HIV/AIDS, while building an organization in this time of financial hardship. She is fearless in her advocacy."

Teaching people with HIV/AIDS to advocate on their own behalf has been key to Ms. Flynn's success. In fact, NYCAHN is a membership organization led by people living with HIV/AIDS. She has trained more than 1,000 of NYCAHN's members in community organizing and advocacy.

Recently, she and her staff pressured the New York City Council to release a report about its emergency housing system. NYCAHN's efforts led to the introduction of the first bill in U.S. history that insures permanent housing for people living with AIDS/HIV. She has also exposed the dangerous conditions that exist in illegal rooming houses the City was using to house formerly incarcerated people with AIDS/HIV.

One woman who works at NYCAHN and finds shelter for people living with HIV/AIDS every day says, "We are all willing to do this grueling work because we know that Jennifer is working 10 times harder all of the time. She is there fighting with her heart to make sure that we have access to housing and to our human rights."

The Robert Wood Johnson Community Health Leadership Program distributes \$1.2 million each year to innovators who have creatively surmounted obstacles to meet the challenges of providing health care and social services to the underserved members of their communities. Ms. Flynn and this year's other winners will be honored at a June event in Washington, D.C. She will receive \$105,000 to